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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/626,895	07/24/2003	Douglas W. Versaw	411702	8400

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LATHROP & GAGE LC
4845 PEARL EAST CIRCLE
SUITE 300
BOULDER, CO 80301

EXAMINER

BOEHLER, ANNE MARIE M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3611

DATE MAILED: 05/06/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Applicati n N . 10/626,895	Applicant(s) VERSAW, DOUGLAS W. ✓	
	Examiner Anne Marie M Boehler	Art Unit 3611	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

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1. Claims 1 and 9 are objected to because of the following informalities:

In claim 1, line 4, "die" should be –side–.

Claim 9 is identical to claim 8, including its dependency on claim 7.

Appropriate correction is required.

2. Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 1, line 7, "the first and second sides" lack clear antecedent basis. It is not clear if applicant means the first and second side members of the assembly or sides of the motorcycle frame.

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) and the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002 do not apply when the reference is a U.S. patent resulting directly or indirectly from an international application filed before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the prior art date of the reference is determined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

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4. Claims 1, 2, 5, and 6-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Alford.

Alford shows a trailer hitch assembly for a motorcycle with first and second side members 30, 32, that are bolted to the rear frame (the frame used for supporting saddlebags), and to left and right side plates of the fender 24. The assembly includes a cross member 35 and a receiver tube 28. A tube 26 is connected to a ball hitch 18, 20, and is received in the receiver tube 28.

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 3, 4, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Alford in view of Maier.

Alford lacks a cross member stiffener.

Maier shows a ball hitch support with elongate side members 54, 56, and cross member 30 for mounting a ball hitch. The cross member and side members each have horizontal reinforcements (horizontal plates at the top side of edges 30, 34, 36) that stiffen the assembly.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide the Alford assembly with means for stiffening the cross member, as taught by Maier, in order to strengthen the assembly.

7. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Taggart.

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Taggart shows a motorcycle hitch assembly with a cross member connecting first and second side members 44 that are connected to the rear frame of a motorcycle by first and second plates 20, 22. The side members are pinned to the plates, rather than bolted, however, it is old and well known and would have been obvious to use bolts rather than pins to connect the side members to the plates, in order to provide a simple, readily available connection.

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Versaw (PGPub 2002/0096859) is applicant's earlier submission.

Miller and Jones each shows a motorcycle hitch with side members, cross members and a ball hitch.

Spiese Harmon, and Hawes show motorcycle hitches.

Watkins shows a cycle trailer with a bent tow bar 26.

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Anne Marie M Boehler whose telephone number is 703-308-0422. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30-5:00, Monday-Thursday, and alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lesley Morris can be reached on 703-308-0629. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

amb 4/30/04

Anne Marie M Boehler
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3611

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